

filed true  
J. Meredith

Wellington (Som.)  
Urban District Council.

---

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**For 1910,**

**By DR. J. MEREDITH,**

**Medical Officer of Health.**

---

*Reprinted from "The Wellington Weekly News,"  
February 8th, 1911.*



# Annual Report for 1910

By DR. J. MEREDITH,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman of the Council of the Wellington (Somerset), Urban Sanitary District.

2nd February, 1911.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit my annual report respecting the general health of the people of the Urban Sanitary District of Wellington for the year 1910. The area of the District is 5,295 acres.

*Population.*—The population according to the 1901 census is 7,283, estimated at the end of June, 1910, as 7,721.

As stated in preceding reports, this estimate will prove to be in excess of the actual number, owing to the fact that no record is available to show the number of persons, mostly young people, who leave the district every year for other places; but this will be corrected by the census in a few months. The number of inhabited houses, according to Census 1901—1,684; average number of persons per house—4·238.

The physical features of the district were fully described in the report for 1909.

*Employment.*—The local industries remain the same; agriculture, woollen manufactures, brick-making, with the usual works, and trading entering into the industries of a country town and district.

*Births.*—The Births in the district for last year were 142; twelve more than during 1909. The birth rate was 18·4 per 1,000 of the population. During the last 11 years it was only lower than this on two occasions, and these were the years 1907 and 1909.

*Deaths.*—There were 103 deaths registered during the year, being the same number as registered the year before, and the mortality rate equalled 13·3 per thousand inhabitants. There were 14 deaths among infants under one year of age, which was equal to 98·6 per 1,000 births.

*Notifications.*—Twenty-eight notifications of infectious diseases were received during the twelve months. There were no notifications between the 20th of October, 1909, and the 21st of August, 1910, a period of ten months.

The illness notified on the 21st of August was scarlet fever, which was imported by a visitor from another district, and was not followed by any other such case in the Wellington area. A case of typhoid fever was brought into the Isolation Ward at the Union Workhouse in September from an outside parish of the Wellington Union. A case of erysipelas was notified on the 2nd of December.

*Diphtheria.*—The other 25 were cases of diphtheria. The first of them was notified on the 8th of September, and the circumstances relating to it, as well as to the others, were reported to the Urban Council on the 6th of October.

The outbreak was found to be traceable, directly or indirectly, to children in two classes belonging to the town's Elementary Schools and the attendance of scholars was seriously affected by the outbreak, owing more to a scare than to danger from the illness. The commencement of the illness was probably due to some one who experienced the disease in a very mild form, scarcely conscious of being really ill, but who, among susceptible persons, particularly young children, became an unconscious carrier and disseminator of the illness. As reported to the regular meeting of the Council, every practicable means were adopted to isolate the sufferers and safeguard other members of families. The gratuitous supply of Diphtheria Anti-toxin Lymph by the Urban Council was well appreciated, and proved most valuable. A case of tuberculosis was reported in July, under the Public Health Regulation of 1908. All that was practicable was done in the matter of isolating and care-taking of the sufferers.

*Schools.*—The general health of the school children was good in all other respects during the year.

Thanks to the close inspection and individual examination given by the County Education Committee's special Inspectors, the less cared for and untidy among children are becoming fewer in number and there is improvement in appearances.

*Rainfall.*—The rainfall for the year, as reported by Mr. F. Burnett, amounted to 42 inches—10 inches above the district's average.

*Water Supply.*—The town water supply has been ample, and the quality good. An



additional supply has been negotiated for and will, probably, be added to the present one during the current year, as it is not probable that there will soon be such another rainy one as the year 1910 proved to be.

The Sanitary Inspector reports that about 100 yards of 3-inch water main have been laid during the year, and 34 new water connections made.

*Sewage.*—The sewage works continue to give entire satisfaction, and are causing no nuisance.

Refuse disposal in the town has been carried on as in former years. A vast quantity of the stuff, with street sweepings and scrapings, has been disposed of—a good deal spread over land.

*Inspections.*—The Inspector sends me a list showing that during the year he served 34 notices in respect to nuisances of one description or another, and the notices were attended to and the nuisance abated. That is to say, 4 dirty and insanitary dwellings, 5 defective drains, 8 faulty w.c. flushings, 1 over-crowding, and 3 offensive manure pits, 1 to cleanse slaughter houses, 9 to clean and whitewash cowsheds, 2 in respect to rain-water pipes which caused nuisance, and 1 about keeping fowls too near dwellings.

The dairies and cowsheds were regularly inspected, and so were the bakeries and slaughter houses.

A few minor defects were noticed. In one case, however, the County Medical Officer of Health, in the course of inspection which he made in the district in the month of April, expressed severe disapprobation as to the condition of one slaughter-house. The affair was laid before the Council on the 5th of May, and the matter in complaint was remedied as far as practicable in such an ill-constructed building.

Systematic inspections were carried on as in former years of all the courts and streets in the town. Factories, workshops, and work-places also received the like attention. There is nothing exceptional connected with them which ought to be specially taken note of. The same may be stated in regard to out-workers, whose condition the Home Office especially enquires after. There was no change either in the dwellings or the condition of their employment from the previous year. The whole work was carried on satisfactorily.

All the Elementary Schools were frequently visited and the reports were satisfactory.

The attendance was good, and no epidemic diseases occurred until during the last few weeks of the year, when an outbreak of diphtheria was discovered, and as stated, 25 cases were reported by the end of December. Only a section of two schools were concerned, but this caused a scare among people, with the result of reducing the school attendance to a depressing extent.

*Tabulated Returns.*—I forward herewith the usual official returns:—Taking Table I. first, it will be noticed that the number of deaths in the district at all ages of persons belonging to it were 3 below the average of the last 10 years—but not the lowest during the period.

The Births were also fewer. A steady decrease has been going on with occasional exception in the birth rate for years past, and this apparently is the case in most Districts.

The infant death rate amounted to 98.6 per 1,000 births during 1910, against an average of 92.9 for the previous 10 years.

Table V. deals with the causes of death among infants. Out of the 14 children that died before reaching one year of age 7 died before they were a week old, one of these being due to overlying and consequent suffocation, the remaining 6 died through lack of natural strength. Two more died before they were a month old. The remaining 5 succumbed to different diseases, to which very young children are exceptionally liable.

The general death record of the district does not call for any unusual observation. As will be noted in Table IV., cancer still claims a great number of victims, and so does consumption in one form or another.

There is no doubt that greater attention is being directed to this devastating disease than there ever was before, and better results may justly be looked for each year in consequence.

The number of vagrants relieved at the Union Workhouse Casual Ward was 1,950, viz.—1,784 men, 133 women, and 33 children. They did not introduce any infectious illness into the district during the year.

Proceedings relating to the Housing and Town Planning Act, 1909, and Housing (Inspection of Districts) Regulations, 1910, are only in the initial state as yet. The coming year, no doubt, will show some of the results of their administration.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

JOHN MEREDITH, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2018 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30244778>

